American Companies Threatened.

Spain is one of the great iron-ore centers of the world, shipping ore heavily to other European countries, as well as to the United States, and while it has some large iron and steel works, its output of the finished product has never been commensurate with its ore development. Now, however, there is a well-defined project of the Krupps to set up a great branch at Bilbao, Spain, to manufacture agricultural machinery for the purpose of driving out of the market American companies who now have a large share of the business.

The GREAT SHADOW

by A. Conan Doyle

AUTHOR of "THE ADVENTURES of SHERLOCK HOLMES"

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CHAPTER XI—Continued.

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We were early risers at that time, and the whole brigade was usually under arms at the first flush of dawn. One morning—it was the sixteenth of June—we had just formed up, and General Adams had ridden up to give some order to Colonel Reynell, within a musket-length of where I stood, when suddenly they both stood staring along the Brussels road. None of us dared move our heads, but every eye in the regiment whisked round, and there we saw an officer, with the cockade of a general's aide-de-camp, thundering down the road as hard as a great dapple-gray horse could carry him. He bent his face over its mane, and flogged at its neck with the slack of the bridle, as though he rode for very life.

"Hullo, Reynell," says the general. "This begins to look like business. What do you make of it?" They both cantered their horses forward, and Adams tore open the dispatch which the messenger handed to him. The envelop had not touched the ground before he turned, waving the letter over his head as if it had been a saber.

"Dismiss!" he cried. "General parade and march in half an hour."

Then, in an instant, all was buzz and bustle, and the news on every lip. Napoleon had crossed the frontier the day before, had pushed the Prussians before him, and was already deep in the country to the east of us with a hundred and fifty thousand men. Away we scuttled to gather our things together and have our breakfast, and in an hour we had marched off and left Ath and the Dender behind us forever. There was good need for haste, for the Prussians had sent no news to Wellington of what was doing, and though he had rushed from Brussels at the first whisper of it, like a good old mastiff from its kennel, it was hard to see how he could come up in time to help the Prussians.

It was a bright, warm morning, and as the brigade tramped down the broad Belgian road the dust rolled up from it like the smoke of a battery. I tell you that we blessed the man that planted the poplars along the sides, for their shadow was better than drink to us. Over across the fields, both to the right and the left, were other roads, one quite close and the other a mile or more from us. A column of infantry was marching down the near one, and it was a fair race between us, for we were each walking for all we were worth. There was such a wreath of dust round them that we could only see the gun barrels and the bearskins breaking out here and there, with the head and shoulders of a mounted officer coming out above the cloud, and the flutter of the colors. It was a brigade of the Guards, but we could not tell which, for we had two of them with us in the campaign. On the far road there was also dust and to spare, but through it there flashed every now and then a long twinkle of brightness, like a hundred silver beads threaded in a line, and the breeze brought down such a snarling, clanging, clashing kind of music as I had never listened to. If I had been left to myself it would have been long before I knew what it was, but our corporals and sergeants were all old soldiers, and I had one trudging along with his halbert at my elbow, who was full of precept and advice.

"That's heavy horse," said he. "You see that double twinkle. That means they have helmet as well as cuirass. It's the Royals or the Enniskillens or the Household. You can hear their cymbals and kettles. The French heavies are too good for us. They have ten to our one, and good men, too. You've got to shoot at their faces, or else at their horses. Mind you that when you see them coming, or else you'll find a four-foot sword stuck through your liver to teach you better. Hark! hark! hark! there's the old music again!"

And as he spoke there came the low grumbling of a cannonade away somewhere to the east of us, deep and hoarse, like a roar of some blood-daubed beast that thrives on the lives of men. At the same instant there was shouting of "Heh! heh! heh!" from behind, and somebody roared, "Let the guns get through!" Looking back, I saw the rear companies split suddenly in two and hurl themselves down on either side into the ditch, while six cream-colored horses, galloping two and two, with their bellies to the ground, came thundering through the gap with a fine twelve-pound gun whirling and creaking behind them. Following were another and another, four-and-twenty in all, flying past us with such a din and clatter, the blue-coated men clinging on to the guns and the tumbrils, the drivers cursing and cracking their whips, the manes flying, the mops and buckets clanking, and the whole air filled with the heavy rumble and the jingling of chains. There was a roar from the ditches and a shout from the gunners, and we saw a rolling gray cloud before us, with a score of busbies breaking through the shadow. Then we closed up again, while the growling ahead of us grew louder and deeper than ever.

"There's three batteries there," said the sergeant. "There's Bull's and Webber Smith's, but the other is new. There's some more on ahead of us, for here's the track of a nine-pounder, and the others were all twelves. Choose a twelve if you want to get hit, for a nine mashes you up, but a twelve snaps you like a carrot"—and he went on to tell about the wonderful wounds that he had seen until my blood ran like iced water in my veins, and you might have rubbed all our faces in pipeclay and we should have been no whiter. "Aye, you'll look sicklier yet when you get a hatful of grape into your tripes," said he; and then, as I saw some of the old soldiers laughing, I began to understand that this man was trying to frighten us, so I began to laugh also, and the others as well, but it was not a very hearty laugh either.

The sun was almost above us when we stopped at a little place called Hal, where there is an old pump from which I drew and drank a shako full of water—and never did a mug of Scotch ale taste as sweet. More guns passed us here, and Vivian's hussars, three regiments of them, smart men with bonny brown horses, a treat to the eye. The noise of the cannons was louder than ever now, and it tingled through my nerves just as it had done years before when, with Edie by my side, I had seen the merchant ship fight with the privateers. It was so loud now that it seemed to me that the battle must be going on just beyond the nearest wood, but my friend the sergeant knew better.

"It's twelve to fifteen miles off," said he. "you may be sure that the general knows that we are not wanted, or we should not be resting here at Hal."

What he said proved to be true, for a minute later down came the colonel with orders that we should stack arms and bivouac where we were, and there we stayed all day, while horse and foot and guns, English, Dutch and Hanoverians, were streaming through. The devil's music went on till evening, sometimes rising into a roar, sometimes sinking into a grumble, until about eight o'clock in the evening it stopped altogether. We were eating our hearts out, as you may think, to know what it all meant, but we knew that what the Duke did would be for the best, so we just waited in patience.

Next day the brigade remained at Hal in the morning, but about midday came an order from the Duke, and we pushed on once more until we came to a village called Braine something, and there we stopped, and time, too, for a sudden thunderstorm came on and a plump of rain that turned all the roads and the fields into bog and mire. We got into the barns at this village for shelter, and there we found two stragglers, one from a kilted regiment and the other a man of the German legion, who had a tale to tell that was as dreary as the weather.

Boney had thrashed the Prussians the day before, and our fellows had been sore put to it to hold their own against Ney, but had beaten him off at last. It seems an old, stale story to you now, but you cannot think how we scrambled around those two men in the barn, and pushed and fought just to catch a word of what they said, and how those who had heard were in turn mobbed by those who had not. We laughed and cheered and groaned all in turn, as we were told how the Forty-fourth had received cavalry in line, how the Dutch-Belgians had fled, and how the Black Watch had taken the lancers into their square, and then had killed them at their leisure. But the lancers had had the laugh on their side when they crumpled up the Sixty-ninth and carried off one of the colors. To wind it all up, the Duke was in retreat, in order to keep in touch with the Prussians, and it was rumored that he would take up his ground and fight a big battle just at the very place where we had been halted.

And soon we saw that this rumor was true, for the weather cleared toward evening, and we were all out on the ridge to see what we could see. It was such a bonny stretch of corn and grazing land, with the crops just half green and half yellow, and fine rye as high as a man's shoulder. A scene more full of peace you could not think of, and look where you would over the low, curving, corn-covered hills, you could see the little village steeples pricking up their spires among the poplars. But slashed right across this pretty picture was a long trail of marching men, some red, some green, some blue, some black, zigzagging over the plain and choking the roads, one end so close that we could shout to them as they stacked their muskets on the ridge at our left, and the other end lost among the woods as far as we could see. And then on other roads we saw the teams of horses toiling and the dull gleam of the guns, and the men straining and swaying as they helped to turn the spokes in the deep, deep mud. As we stood there regiment after regiment and brigade after brigade took position on the ridge, and ere the sun had set we lay in a line of over sixty thousand men, blocking Napoleon's way to Brussels. But the rain had come swishing down again, and we of the Seventy-first rushed off to our barn once more, where we had better quarters than the greater part of our comrades, who lay stretched in the mud, with the storm beating upon them, until the first peep of day.

CHAPTER XII.

The Shadow on the Land.

It was still drizzling in the morning, with brown, drifting clouds and a damp, chilly wind. It was a queer thing for me as I opened my eyes to think that I should be in a battle that day, though none of us ever thought it would be such a one as it proved to be. We were up and ready, however, with the first light, and as we threw open the doors of our barn we heard the most lovely music that I ever listened to playing somewhere in the distance. We all stood in clusters hearkening to it, it was so sweet and innocent and sad-like. But our sergeant laughed when he saw how it had pleased us all.

"Them are the French bands," said he; "and if you come out here you'll see what some of you may not live to see again."

Out we went—the beautiful music still sounding in our ears, and stood on a rise just outside the barn. Down below, at the bottom of the slope, about half a musket shot from us, was a snug tiled farm with a hedge and a bit of an apple orchard. All round it a line of men in red coats and high fur hats were working like bees, knocking holes in the wall and barring up the doors.

"Them's the light companies of the Guards," said the sergeant. "They'll hold that farm while one of them can wag a finger. But look over yonder, and you'll see the campfires of the French."

We looked across the valley at the low ridge upon the farther side, and saw a thousand little yellow points of flame, with the dark smoke wreathing up slowly in the heavy air. There was another farmhouse on the farther side of the valley, and as we watched we suddenly saw a little group of horsemen appear on a knoll beside it and look across at us. There were a dozen hussars behind, and in front five men, three with helmets, one with a long, straight, red feather in his hat, and the last with a low cap.

"By God!" cried the sergeant. "That's him! That's Boney, the one with the gray horse. Aye, I'll lay a month's pay on it."

I strained my eyes to see him, this man who had cast that great shadow over Europe which darkened the nations for five-and-twenty years, and which had even fallen across our out-of-the-world little sheep farm, and had dragged us all—myself, Edie and Jim—out of the lives that our folk had lived before us. As far as I could see he was a dumpy, square-shouldered kind of man, and he held his double glasses to his eyes with his elbows spread very wide out on each side. I was still staring when I heard the catch of a man's breath by my side, and there was Jim, his eyes glowing like two coals and his face thrust over my shoulder.

"That's he, Jock," he whispered.

"Yes, that's Boney," said I.

"No, no; it's he. This De Lapp or De Lissac, or whatever his devil's name is. It is he."

Then I saw him at once. It was the horseman with the high red feather in his hat. Even at that distance I could have sworn to the slope of his shoulders and the way he carried his head. I clapped my hand upon Jim's sleeve, for I could see that his blood was boiling at the sight of the man, and that he was ready for any madness. But at that moment Bonaparte seemed to lean over and say something to De Lissac, and the party wheeled and dashed away, while there came the bang of a gun and a white spray of smoke from a battery along the ridge. At the same instant the assembly was blown in our village, and we rushed for our arms and fell in. There was a burst of firing all along the line, and we thought that the battle had begun, but it came really from our fellows cleaning their pieces, for their priming was in some danger of being wet from the damp night.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Early Irish History.

In the earliest time of which there is any record, Ireland was inhabited by tribes of the great Celtic family, to which belonged the ancient Britons of the larger island, and the Gauls of the country now known as France. Each tribe had its chief, and after a time a supreme monarch came to the front. One of the most famous of these was Brian, who overthrew the invading Danes in the battle of Clontarf, fought in the year 1014 near Dublin. He was slain in his tent at the close of the fight. After his death the supreme monarchy was often in complete abeyance, misrule and anarchy widely prevailed and the ancient form of society was largely broken up. It is said that Roderick O'Connor, son of Turlough, was the last of the monarchs of Celtic Ireland. From that time the influence of Anglo-Normans increased.

Real Estate Note.

Father (mockingly to young suitor)—Well, the nerve of you to ask my daughter to share your lot when you haven't a single foot of real estate in your name.

Boasting.

In a foreword written for a recently published book on aviation, Viscount Northcliffe asserts that Great Britain is already ruling the air. English officials admit, however, that their air mail service does not show profits equal to those of the United States service.

Exactly.

She—They have a course at our college on how to select and keep help.

He—The hire education, eh?